



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

WANDERINGS IN THE SOUTHWEST.

Texas May 18th.

A FEW days since, I left the New Orleans steamer at the terminus of her route, and deposited myself, with my baggage, in a yacht for Indianola. Arriving there, I found a long pier running out into the shoal, milky water, and thereon sitting a few men and boys, fishing, but apparently with little success. I walked up into the town—a few frame houses prematurely old, two or three stores, a tavern-stand deserted, a mule with saddle on, and head hanging low and drowsily, half-a-dozen idle men, sitting on boxes—and the whole surrounded by an illimitable expanse of water and prairie, was the sum total of Indianola. I returned to the yacht, and had my baggage put on board again to go to Port Lavacca. A gentle southern breeze wafted us slowly along thitherwards. A long file of pelicans, apparently encumbered by the weight of their enormous bills, were slowly flapping their silent way from their hunting-grounds near the sea-shore, and numerous black-headed gulls followed us with a shrill cry for small favors from the galley. The shore everywhere presents a bank twelve or fifteen feet high, abrupt, from the constant invasion of the waves. The water is shoal, leaving, when the tide is out, light-colored mud flats.

Another pier, built on piles, with several schooners loading with cotton, another collection of pine board houses; many clumsy, broad-wheeled, covered carts, with a small drove of cattle before each of them—we are at Port Lavacca. I decided to send my baggage by one of the Mexican carts, and to purchase a horse, and travel at my leisure out of the beaten road. My object being to enjoy and commune with Nature, I shall travel alone, that even the sound of another's voice may not disturb the harmony. I went to a stable to get a horse. There was one which was very highly recommended to me. It was the property of a Mexican, and was of a light dun color. Age and hard service protruded with each particular bone—his fore feet spread apart, while his knees nearly rubbed each other—the hoofs were flat and much split. I am but a poor judge of horse-flesh, but I was not favorably impressed with the first sight of this Buono Caballo, but this was of Spanish stock, and there was no knowing what he might do, so I requested the owner to mount and show him up. He walked, he trotted, and, animated by the zeal of the rider, he did make a faint effort to gallop, but it was a melancholy display of spirit. But, said the owner, the chief quality in a horse was to be a good walker. I could have him for just forty-five dollars, and I must close at once, as the owner would leave town with him in an hour if he was not sold. I went to another stable where I found "a mountain pony," of fine qualities, which could endure any kind of usage, and live on grass exclusively. He was already saddled, and I might have him for forty dollars, saddle included. I had thought that one of the distinguishing qualities of the mountain pony was the high, small hoof, similar to the mule's, but this specimen had them more spreading than the first horse, and as badly split. His weight was about that of a Mexican mule, and his chest so narrow

that a common dinner-knife could reach through it. His face was covered with incrustations, and, although I did not know what quality the muscle of a mountain pony might have, it appeared to me that the question might be raised by the natives on the road, why I did not "pack" the horse and carry him rather than permit him to carry me. I directed the saddle to be removed, and a red, quivering denudation came to sight. Generous fellow, he would have given me the saddle on the horse's back! But this was nothing at all—in two or three days that would all be well, and he poured from a bottle some unctuous matter which was to heal it up at once. This was the end of a day spent among the horse-jockeys in Texas, who, I venture to say, will sustain the reputation of the fraternity in any part of the world.

I next applied to one of the old Texans, whom I have generally found to be a superior class of men. He sent his Mexican vaccaro out to the ranch, where he had a herd of two hundred, to bring some in. He returned the next morning with three, from which I might choose; the prices ranging from forty-five to sixty-five dollars. I made choice of a fine specimen of the native Mexican wild stock, bearing the token of a former possession in a curious hieroglyphic, branded on his left thigh. From his dark brown color, the Mexicans call him "Pelicano," the pelican. His tail reaches quite to the ground, and his mane is long, hanging wildly about his face. His nostrils are wide, as is the space between his eyes, which are so quick in their movements, and yet so kind and confiding, that no sooner had they looked into mine than a mutual attachment sprang up between us, and I resolved to become the proprietor of Pelicano. His life has been spent on the prairie—his little round hoof, smooth as polished horn, had never had its normal proportions marred by the blacksmith's knife or nails, nor have his morals been corrupted by intercourse with jockeys, or his self-respect impaired by bad oats or corn. Such is the companion I have chosen for my journeyings, and, in case of danger, I must depend upon his legs for safety, for I have no means of defence.

Early on the 4th inst., I took leave of my friends at Port Lavacca. Major G., the grey-haired Texan who sold me my horse, was there to see me start, and to give me some counsel, and selected for me a Mexican saddle, such as are generally adopted here. I placed a loose coffee sack next to the horse's back, as he said, to prevent "scalding," then, a pair of blankets, and upon these the saddle, strongly girted, and over this a surcingle. A hair rope, about six rods long, called a *cabris*, to stake out the horse in the grass, a pair of saddle-bags, and a great coat lashed to the saddle, completed my equipage. I rode some miles to a line of trees marking the course of the Chocolate Creek. Notwithstanding that it had not rained for more than four months, the grass here was rank and of a bright green, and the flowers, though few, were showy. Two species of the mimosa, or sensitive plant, were plentiful, one bearing a red, the other a yellow, flower. The clouds which overcast the sky when I started, broke away, about nine o'clock, into floating fragments, and the sun shone down with great power. Cattle, with un-

usually large horns, and very docile, were scattered about, and ash-colored doves flew up at every few paces. These are called *coro camino* by the Mexicans, and are very numerous. They closely resemble the turtle dove, and when one is on a tree alone, it utters the same plaintive note that the turtle does. There were meadow-larks identical in appearance with those in the northern States, and towards evening they seem determined to attract attention, flying before the traveller from one dead stalk to another, uttering, as it alights, a strain so sad, that you wonder if it is not tired of living on these prairies. The soil is a black loam, fissured everywhere by the drouth, and bearing deep impressions of cattle's feet made during the rains. The roads, at such times, must be very heavy. I stopped a short time at the house built by Dr. Taylor, who died at Port Lavacca two years since. It is built on piles ten or twelve feet from the ground, as a protection from the malaria, and surrounded by a grove of live oaks, which, at the moment, were filled with blackbirds, and the garden attached was hedged in by thrifty osage orange. I spent an hour in conversation with the intelligent lady of the house, after which I resumed the same obscure trail I had been following, until the grove I had left had sunk below the horizon, and I was in a sea of deep green, on which cattle were no longer to be seen, no tree for shelter, or stream for refreshment—the sun all the time pouring down a blistering heat upon horse and rider, until the horizon dances from its effect.

Yet is the prairie no desert—one sees many familiar faces among the flowers there, and the chirp of the cricket, and the locust, sound as familiar as if you were harvesting in our northern fields. The night-hawk, startled from its covert, soars blindly into the sunlight—the whistling of the swift wing of turtle doves—the startling whirr of the grouse, and uninterrupted songs of larks and sparrows, all were sounds so familiar as to make me forget that I was on the borders of the torrid zone. Nor was I altogether unobserved, for, wherever I cast my eyes, the red deer were watching me, but so distant, that one seeing them, for the first time, could not be sure they were deer without a glass, but by its aid, I could distinguish the horns plainly. As I rode along, a fawn started from the long grass, where its mother had left it, probably, to go for water, and the sight of the beautiful creature bounding away before me, so animated me, that I started Pelicano in pursuit, without any intention, however, of catching the animal, but the horse had been reared to the chaise, and went in to win. For a while it was an even race, but the fawn began to lag, and we were close upon it, when it doubled, and Pelicano shot by it so far that, before I could turn him again, the fawn was almost out of sight. These evolutions were repeated, until the fawn, exhausted, lay down, and Pelicano stood astride of it—when, dismounting, I took it up and threw it across the saddle, too weary to make any resistance. It was a beautiful creature. It made no effort to escape, but lay panting before me, its black eyes turned to me so gently—its well turned head and limbs so expressive of innocence and grace, that, instead of being the capturer, I was

captivated. I was perplexed to determine what to do with it—should I carry it to the next ranch, about six miles further on? I might subject it to cruelty, and, perhaps, death. I had carried it about a mile, when it made a slight effort to escape, and, at the same time, uttered a cry so human, that it pierced my very soul, and I removed all restraint from it. With a bound it struck the turf, and was away retracing its steps. "Go!" I said, "make the best of your brief life—the white man is on your track, a foe more ruthless than the savage—this kills only to supply his wants, but that destroys to gratify a passion."

About the middle of the afternoon I halted at a little well, dug at the base of a sandy knoll, and, having staked out Pelicano to browse, I posted myself under the shade of a live oak. I had ridden eighteen miles, and was anxious to find the house at which I was advised to spend the first night. The prairie was more rolling than that portion which I had passed; and, in the vicinity of the Guadalupe, little sandy knolls, destitute of grass, offered as compensation fine clusters of oak and hackberry trees. The live oaks grow to a large size, with branches much knarled, and draped with the Spanish moss in large masses, hanging not only from the twigs, but from all the large branches, in many places completely concealing the limbs, except from below. The moss, like the bark, is of a light grey. I stopped that night at an inn kept by a widow lady and her sons.

I resumed my way at a late hour the next morning, in order to favor the horse, and because I also was not a little wearied. My road led through a low bottom, with coarse grass and rushes, some prickly pears, with flowers, orange-colored, striped with red like a bizarre tulip, then into a thicket of a great variety of trees, of which I recognized none as species common to the north, though many, if not all, belonging to genera commonly distributed. I noticed the sycamore, three species of the elm, one of maple, and four of oak. In one respect only, does the forest take a tropical aspect, and that is in the number of climbers and vines that hang on the trunks of the trees, and often load down their tops. These, with the Spanish moss, gives a very singular effect to the scenery. I crossed the bed of a stream, nearly dry now, but showing that the bottom is subject to inundations, and as I rode in, a huge blue heron, fishing in a muddy pool near by, rose and flapped away into security. He need not have troubled himself—I did not come to destroy. Leaving this thicket, whose shade had been very grateful to me for an hour, the road skirted a beautiful prairie about four miles long, and two broad, whose clayey soil, of a dark blue color, was covered with a growth of grass green as young corn, but was entirely devoid of living inhabitants—not a moving creature was to be seen on it, save my horse and myself. I reached the Guadalupe about noon. It is there about thirty yards wide, and flows with a speed of about five miles an hour, and turbid with the clay of its banks, which were overhung with willows. I spent the heat of the day sitting on the river bank, watching the fish playing and pursuing each other, listening to the songs of many strange birds, brushing the little black flies from my face, and drinking tepid water

from the river. I am startled by the humming bird, which shoots by like an Indian's arrow, and high up, the vulture, with wing feathers spread like the fingers of an open hand, sails in majestic circles; for the vulture family, though obscene and disgusting birds on the ground, are unsurpassed in the grace and ease of their flight. They seem to have studied great circle sailing. Pelicano bites alternately the grass and the great green flies that are biting him, and waits my motions.

About three o'clock I resaddled, and ascended an abrupt elevation of about one hundred feet, to an extensive prairie extending further than the eye could reach. The soil was a dark loam, with fresh water bivalves of the genus *anodonta* showing in the water-worn ravines. Here was the cabin of the man who keeps the ferry. Many cattle were scattered over the prairie, and droves of horses and herds of deer were always in sight. The scene was so novel and beautiful, that I paid too little attention to the road, which was but a trail or bridle-path, and as the sun went down, I could see no signs of a settlement, while the continued presence of deer made me fearful that I should be compelled to pass the night on the plain. I concluded to push on for a clump of trees to the left, and was urging my horse to a gallop, when I saw a solitary horse and rider on the horizon, just where the sun had gone down. I rode towards him, and when I had approached within hailing distance, he called to me—"Well, Dr., how do you fare on God's prairies?" He was a man whom I had met at Port Lavacca, and was going back to that place. He directed me to follow the path till I found one leaving it at right angles, which would lead me to the house of a Mr. Cromwell. I hurried on until it was so dark that I could no longer see the path, when I gave up all hope of finding a house. I looked for something to fasten the horse to, but not a stake or bush was in sight. I would have laid down and held the horse, so that he might graze, but I knew that in spite of our new-formed mutual regard, he would escape if I fell asleep, and if I tied him to my foot, he might, in case of fright, injure me severely. I had no choice but to travel. At length I discovered, by the deepening twilight, a bush, but proceeding towards it, discovered that it grew from the side of a ravine, and was unapproachable. One who has been thus alone in a strange, wild prairie, will understand my feelings. It grew very dark, and the fire-flies flashed around me as if in merry mockery, only making the way more dark. The night-hawk swooped down to me with a sound that I interpreted to a prolonged boo-oo, and I plodded along cautiously, leading the horse. I thought I discovered a house, but on approaching it, found it to be a cluster of small trees. Here was a fastening point, but now I concluded to keep on still further. I seemed to be on the summit of a declivity, and peered earnestly, along the undistinguishable horizon, but as I walked along, could not perceive that my steps descended. I was still on the summit, and the prairie led down every way from me. At length I caught a glimpse of a light, and as I approached it I heard the sound of a hand-mill. I soon distinguished a cluster of huts, and led Pelicano into the enclosure.

Several negroes appeared and took my horse, when I found that I had, as it were by chance, stumbled upon the place I was in search of, but which I supposed I had passed hours before. Mr. Cromwell had also been belated looking for cattle, and had but just returned to a late supper, which I was happy to be permitted to share with him.

J. D. B. S.

SWORDS.

In the simple old Saxon days the sword played a considerable part in the making of a knight. The candidate for chivalry was required, the day before his consecration, to confess; and then pass the night in the church, in prayer and fasting. On the following day he was to hear mass, and during the service, he placed his sword upon the altar; the priest, after the Gospel, took the weapon, blessed it, and then, with benison on the warrior, laid the blade on the neck of the knight, who, however, was not a knight complete until he had received the Sacrament as a complement of the blessing.

Thus the Church made her own cavaliers; but the Normans, who came among us under a banner blessed by the Pope, held this method of consecration in scorn and abomination. The knights so made they accounted of as no knights at all, but as mere "tardy troopers and degenerate plebeians." So, in modern times, a militia ensign with a Norman name affects to look with contempt on a "captain," who may have fought his way to his title in Spain or South America; and the young noble, who at Oxford has taken a degree, not conferred by right of knowledge, but seized by right of nobility, pretends to look down upon men who, at Bonn, at Marburg, or at Göttingen, have penned their Latin thesis and maintained its statements against all adversaries, and who have won their honors—in short, by earning and deserving them.

They were godless fellows, those Normans, though they did come with a papal benediction. Previous to their appearance no deed was legal that was not marked by golden crosses and other sacred signs. The Normen *changerent tout cela*: they transferred estates simply by word of mouth, without writing or charter, and only with the sword, helmet, horn, or cup of the owner. Tenements, we are told, were conveyed with a spur, a bow, an arrow, or even a "bodyscraper." But this was soon found to be inconvenient; and then the conquerors introduced the custom of confirming deeds by wax impressions, made by the especial seal of each person, with the subscription thereto of three or four witnesses present. Now many a Norman had no other seal than the end of the pommet of his sword, and by such an instrument many a Saxon was pommel out of his estate.

And what were these Normans, from whom so many amongst us are proud to trace their descent? They were—at least good numbers of them were—unbaptized thieves. Such certainly were the Mandevilles and Dandevilles, the Mohuns and Bohuns, the Bissets and Bassets. These were fellows who had converted themselves to Christianity fifty times in the course of the year; for the sake of the garment given each time to every convert. Those renowned swordsmen, the Bagotes, Bastards, Talbots, Lacey, Percys,—what were they, but so many robbers who came hither penniless, and were very much astonished at the superabundance of their own good fortune?

Still lower in the scale must have been those Norman swordsmen whose names translated signify Bull-head, Oxeye, Dirty-villain, Breechless, and the like. Nay, Wim (the) Carter,